

VZCZCXRO7914
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1521 1271842
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 071842Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1055
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001521

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL BOND EMPHASIZES NEED FOR LEGISLATIVE
PROGRESS TO AL-HAKIM

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel Speckhard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a May 5 meeting with SCIRI chairman Abdelaziz al-Hakim, CODEL Bond--Sen. Christopher Bond (R-MO), Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA)--impressed on al-Hakim the importance of quick progress on key legislative issues related to reconciliation. Al-Hakim noted that there had been significant progress on these issues but that in the end it would be up to the Council of Representatives (CoR). He said that discussions were under way on potentially extending the current legislative session of the CoR beyond June 30. Al-Hakim told his guests that he believed the "military situation" was the most important issue and stressed the need for faster equipping, training, and transfer of authority to Iraqi forces. End summary.

¶2. (C) Senator Bond opened by noting that the delegation had heard encouraging signs of progress in Iraq, particularly in the development of Iraqi security forces (ISF), but knew there were important security and legislative challenges ahead. He told al-Hakim that the delegation would need to report back to Congress about any military advances, but also about progress on political and economic measures as well. Al-Hakim pointed to a growing readiness to fight al-Qaeda coming from the tribes, political forces such as the Iraqi Islamic Party, religious scholars, and the general public. "What is important now is the military situation," al-Hakim continued, calling for faster equipping and training of ISF and transfer of authorities so that the ISF, not the coalition, could "be out on the streets."

¶3. (C) Senator Chambliss urged al-Hakim to work "harder than ever" to realize political progress. Noting a "rumor" that the CoR might take a two month break in the summer, he remarked that such a break would not be well perceived in the U.S. at this critical time. Al-Hakim replied that according to Iraq's Constitution and CoR by-laws, the CoR had two two-month recesses during its yearly calendar but there were mechanisms to shorten these recesses. He assured his guests that discussions were under way on this issue.

¶4. (C) Senator Snow asked al-Hakim what progress was being made, and could be made, on reconciliation. Al-Hakim said that there were "continuing efforts," describing a recent meeting where "influential advisors of the various components of Iraqi society" discussed what was needed for reconciliation. While al-Hakim welcomed the frank exchange at this meeting, he noted his concern that "the more concessions you give, the more demands you get." The majority (i.e., the Shi'a) had given many concessions, al-Hakim continued, "but still the issue is not resolved." Senator Chambliss pressed al-Hakim for his estimate on when important items on the reconciliation agenda would be completed. Al-Hakim expressed optimism that there would be progress in the next few weeks. He noted that the

constitutional review committee had almost finished its work; that the hydrocarbon law had been approved by the GOI and had already been extensively debated; and that a deBaathification reform law was at the CoR. But he also observed that progress depended on the "makeup of the CoR and the vision of its members." The Sunnis and Kurds had issues on some parts of the oil law, he continued; "these issues have to be raised and dealt with to achieve results."

15. (U) CODEL Bond did not have the opportunity to clear this cable before their departure.
SPECKHARD